

# Zidovudine

zye-DOE-vyoo-deen

**Brand Name:** Retrovir

**Drug Class:** Nucleoside Reverse Transcriptase Inhibitors

Zidovudine, also known as AZT, ZDV, or Retrovir, is a type of antiretroviral drug called a nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor (NRTI). This class of medicines blocks reverse transcriptase, a protein that HIV needs to make more copies of itself. This medicine does not cure or prevent HIV infection or AIDS and does not reduce the risk of passing the virus to other people.

## HIV/AIDS-Related Uses

Zidovudine was approved by the FDA on March 19, 1987, for the treatment of HIV infection in adults and in children 3 months of age or older. This medicine is also approved for use in HIV infected women to prevent the virus from being passed to their babies during pregnancy and delivery. It is then given to these babies for the first 6 weeks of life. Although the FDA does not approve this practice, zidovudine may be used to prevent workers from getting HIV infection after they accidentally come into contact with the virus on the job.

## Dosage Form/Administration

Zidovudine comes in capsule, tablet, and solution forms that are taken orally and an injectable form that is given intravenously. Zidovudine is also available in tablet form combined with lamivudine (another NRTI) and with lamivudine and abacavir sulfate. The zidovudine/lamivudine combination is called Combivir; the zidovudine/lamivudine/abacavir sulfate combination is called Trizivir.

## Recommended Daily Dose

The recommended oral dose of zidovudine is 600 mg a day (either 300 mg twice a day or 200 mg three times a day). The recommended dose in pediatric patients age 6 weeks to 12 years is 160 mg/m<sup>2</sup> every 8 hours (480 mg/m<sup>2</sup>/day up to a maximum of 200 mg every 8 hours).

The recommended dosing regimen for pregnant women who are at least 14 weeks into their pregnancy is 100 mg five times per day until the start of labor. Intravenous zidovudine should be given during labor and delivery. The newborn should receive zidovudine every 6 hours starting within 12 hours after birth and continuing through 6 weeks of age. The recommended dose of zidovudine for the infant is based on the infant's

weight.

Some patients may benefit from different doses of zidovudine. The recommended dose for patients on dialysis is 100 mg every 6 to 8 hours. Patients should always take zidovudine as prescribed by their doctors.

## Contraindications

Individuals should tell a doctor about any medical problems before taking this medicine.

## Possible Side Effects

Along with its desired effects, zidovudine can cause some unwanted effects, including pale skin, unusual tiredness or weakness, fever, chills, or sore throat. Individuals should tell a doctor if they have any of these side effects.

Other side effects may not be serious and may lessen or disappear with continued use of the medicine. Less serious side effects of this medicine include severe headache, trouble sleeping, muscle soreness, and nausea. Individuals should tell a doctor if these side effects continue or are bothersome.

## Drug and Food Interactions

A doctor should be notified of any other medications being taken, including prescription, nonprescription (over-the-counter), or herbal medications.

## Clinical Trials

For information on clinical trials that involve Zidovudine, visit the ClinicalTrials.gov web site at <http://www.clinicaltrials.gov>. In the Search box, enter: Zidovudine AND HIV Infections.



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## **Manufacturer Information**

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(888) 825-5249

Retrovir  
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## **For More Information**

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Contact your doctor or an AIDSinfo Health Information Specialist:

- Via Phone: 1-800-448-0440 Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 5:00 p.m. ET
- Via Live Help: [http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live\\_help](http://aidsinfo.nih.gov/live_help) Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. (Noon) - 4:00 p.m. ET